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ABSTRACT

As an informational aid for students who are planning to take NLN (National League of Nursing) Achievement Tests, the text and accompanying exercises in this module describe NLN testing procedures and fundamental test-taking skills. After introductory material discussing the importance of mastering test-taking skills, the module describes how to properly fill in the machine-readable answer sheets used on NLN exams and summarizes the NLN test instructions. This is followed by a discussion of the impact of correction factors (or penalties for guessing) on test grading and on the student's test-taking strategy. A method of budgeting available time among test questions is then described, by which the student spends an initial block of time answering questions which s/he finds relatively easy and then returns, as time permits, to answer the more difficult items. The module then discusses the adverse effects of excessive anxiety on a student's test-taking ability and suggests methods of relieving tension while taking the exam. The module concludes with a facsimile NLN Achievement Test which provides the student with an opportunity to apply learned test-taking skills and to practice grading an exam which enforces penalties for guessing. Shorter reinforcement exercises are provided throughout the module. (JP)

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HEALTH INSTRUCTION PACKAGES

Test-Taking Strategies for the N. L. N. (National League of Nursing) Achievement Tests

by

Leslie Miller Bateman

HEALTH INSTRUCTION EXCHANGE

A Project of the League for Innovation in the Community College

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TEST-TAKING STRATEGIES

FOR THE

N.L.N. (NATIONAL LEAGUE OF NURSING) ACHIEVEMENT TESTS

By

Leslie Miller Bateman

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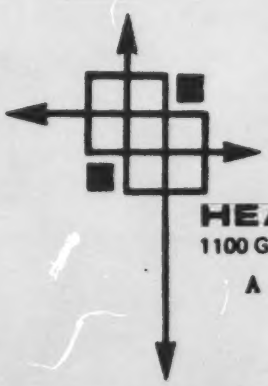
TITLE:	Test-Taking Strategies for the N.L.N. (National Leauge of Nursing) Achievement Tests
AUTHOR:	Leslie Miller Bateman
INSTITUTION:	Brookdale Community College, Lincroft, N.J.
INTENDED STUDENTS:	Any college student who will be taking standardized multiple choice tests, in particular, the N.L.N.
MATERIALS NEEDED:.	Each user of this package should be able to keep the following pages for his/her own use: 1) Post-Test answer sheet; 2) Test-Taking strategies-A Quick Review (these pages should be duplicated in sufficient quantity to allow this.)

FIELD TEST COPY



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Are YOU planning to take a National League of Nursing (N.L.N.) Test soon?

Have your friends filled you with advice about what a difficult test it will be?

Do you hope you can get at least one question correct?

Do you sometimes feel tense or nervous before or during tests?

If you answered "yes" to any or all of the above questions,

This is your lucky day!

Because:

You have selected this instructional package!

Do you feel uneasy when you face a new situation?

Do you feel uncomfortable when you are given something you've never seen before and you're told "Do it."?

Then, this is the packet for you!

By now, you are probably asking yourself these questions:

"How will this package help me?"

"Does it have all the answers?"

Read on!

Does this package have "All The Answers"?

To be honest, no it doesn't. This package will not tell you:

What to study	or	How to study it

But it WILL help you with some very important "Test-Taking" skills!

And it should help you to feel more confident as you sit down to take the N.L.N. Achievement tests!

In this package, you will do many things, including:

Learn how the N.L.N. tests are scored

Discover "Penalties for guessing" and "Correction Factors"

Take and score a sample test

Learn how to budget your time on tests

Practice answering questions efficiently

Practice relaxing when you feel yourself becoming too tense

(Did you know that a little bit of tension is good for you?)

What happens at the end of this package?

When you have finished the instruction and practice exercises, you will have the opportunity to demonstrate your test-taking skills by taking a short test. This test will not have the same questions as an actual N.L.N. test, but everything else will be as much like the N.L.N. as possible:

You will use an actual N.L.N. answer sheet.

You will budget your time wisely, just like you'll do on the actual N.L.N. tests.

You will use the same scoring system as is used on the N.L.N. tests.

By now, you are probably saying "Why should I spend all this time just learning the 'mechanics' of taking tests?"

That's a very good question!

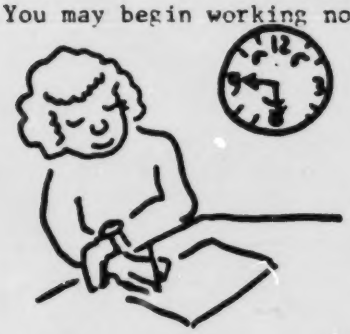
After you've read the following anecdotes, you should be able to answer that question!

Let's take a short break and observe two students taking the same test. Assume that both students have studied in the same way and both know exactly the same amount of the actual content material that is asked about in the test questions.

1. Alana Zellerbach slid into her seat at the N.L.N. test center. She grabbed a pen from her purse. Oops, the examiner said to use pencil.
Here's the answer sheet. Let's see...
A - L - A - N - A Z - E - L - L
Ouch, that says 'last name first'.
"Now fill in your school code".
Wow, I'm not even finished with my name yet.
"Turn to page one of the test booklet and read the instructions."
"You will have two hours to do the test. Begin working now."
Feeling tense---tense---PANIC! How to relax?
"Time is up. Turn in your test papers."
Ugh, I only got to question 88 and look, I Knew the answers to three of the questions on the last page but I never got to them. I know I'll never pass any of these tests. What an awful day--what an awful test!

2.

Zelda Allen slid into her seat at the N.L.N. test center. Here's the answer sheet. A - L - L - E - N - space - Z - E - L - D - A and fill in the circles under each letter. "Fill in your school code next." Hey, this is just like I practiced! "Please read the instructions on page one of the test booklet." "You will have two hours to do the test. You may begin working now."

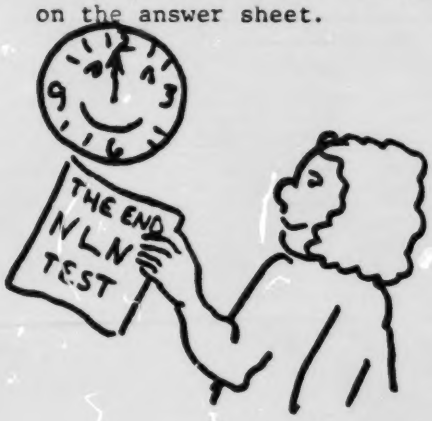


Let me think---2 hours for 120 questions. That means about 30 questions for each half hour. First I'll scan through the entire test and answer all the questions I know.

30 minutes gone----Now back to the beginning to try some of those I left blank earlier. Hmm--eliminate that choice, and that one. I think it's a B. And the next one? C

Feeling some tension---will I finish? Stretch my legs, wiggle my toes. Grab a stick of gum. More questions---

Only 20 minutes to go. I've answered all I know and all I thought I could figure out. Better look at some of those questions that are still blanks on the answer sheet.



5 minutes left
check quickly---all answers clearly marked--no smudges, erasures done completely, information on the front side filled in correctly.

Wow! This was a tough test, but at least I had enough time to answer all the questions I knew and to guess intelligently on some of the others. This was a tough test, but not impossible. Now--turn in my test paper and meet my friends for a well deserved afternoon of fun!

Are YOU more like Alana or Zelda? Where would you be, if you placed yourself on this line?

Alana _____ Zelda

Wherever you are now, you should be further to the right after completing this packet!

You should feel more confident, more relaxed, and more prepared for the N.L.N. tests!

Would you like to have a quarantee that you'll get some answers correct? Sure! Who wouldn't?

Think about some of the tests you've taken in the past. What is one question that you've always had to answer and you've always gotten that answer right?

You guessed it--- "What is your name?"

The N.L.N. tests follow that same familiar pattern. On each answer sheet, you will be asked your name. But the authors of the N.L.N. tests didn't want to make life too easy for you, so they added 3 challenges to the task of filling in your name on the answer sheets.

CHALLENGE 1: Arrange your name in the proper order:

Last name -- First name--middle initial

Suppose your name is: Annabel Collandro Smith
Which of these is the correct way to write it?

A. Annabel Collandro Smith
B. Smith, Annabel Collandro
C. Smith, Annabel C.
D. Annabel C. Smith

Right! Answer C shows the name in the correct order. Was Challenge # 1 much of a challenge?

Let's move on to the second challenge:

CHALLENGE 2: Do not use commas or periods in your name. Instead, skip a space between each part.

Here are three sample names, written in boxes like those on the N.L.N. answer sheets. Which one of these is done correctly?

C	A	S	S	I	D	Y		H	O	P	A	L	O	N	G		N			
B	A	C	H		J	O	H	A	N	N		S	E	B	A	S	T	I	A	N
W	R	I	T	E	R	,	I	M	A		J	.								

Yes, the great cowboy rides off into the sunset with the girl, the gold, and the correct answer.

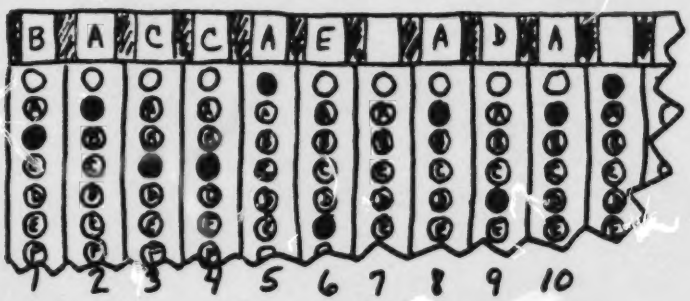
Where did Bach hit a sour note? He wrote his entire middle name.

And Ima? She remembered her punctuation rules too well from English class. The N.L.N. instructions say to OMIT punctuation.

Writing your name couldn't get any more difficult, could it?

CHALLENGE 3: Under each letter of your name, blacken the circle that corresponds to that letter.

In which of these columns has a mistake been made?



Did you find the error in column 5? Congratulations!
The A should have been filled in, not the empty circle at the top.

Are there any other errors?

What do you suppose is the purpose of the empty circles?

Right! They are like spaces or punctuation marks. They tell the computer which scores the tests that one part of your name has ended and that another part will start soon.

Therefore: Every "space" in your name must have an empty circle blackened to correspond to it.

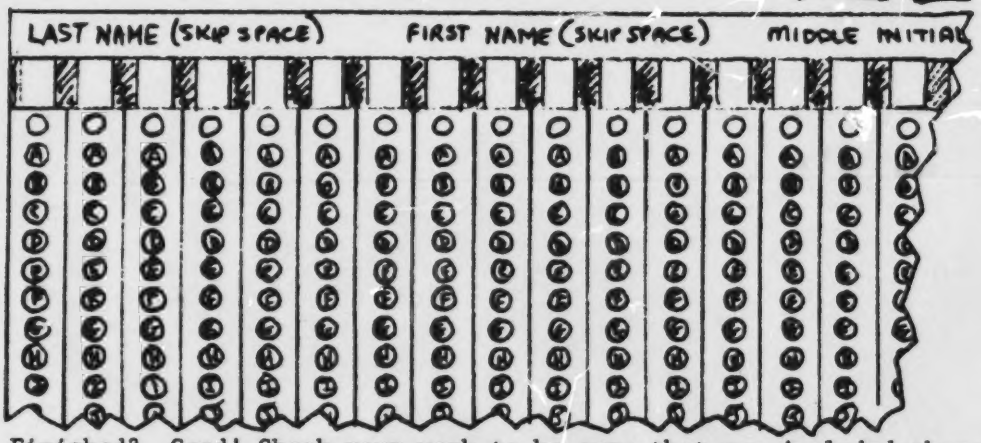
How should column 7 look in the above exercise?

Right! Answer B in the correct way to record a space between words.

Now that you've mastered three challenges for filling in your name and the name grid, how about one short practice exercise on these skills?

Here it is: On your answer sheet for this package, find the answer grid that looks just like the one below. It will be labeled "grid for exercise on page 7". Fill in that grid for a student named:

Ellen Fae Habich



Finished? Good! Check your work to be sure that you included these:

1. last name--space--first name--space--middle initial
2. Leave spaces between words, do not use commas or periods.
3. Circles under the letters are filled in correctly. Remember to fill in empty circles at the top to correspond to spaces in the name.

The N.L.N. answer sheet will also ask you other information:

Test Number | Form | School Code | Type of Program

When you are actually taking an N.L.N. test, the examiner will tell you the information to put in those boxes. The skills involved are the same as you practiced here. You will fill in circles under the numbers or words. Just be your usual careful self and this part of the test work will be easy!

Every test asks you to write your name.

Every test, no matter what the subject, also asks you something else. What do you suppose that is?

Right! "PLEASE READ THE INSTRUCTIONS"

Which of the following information would likely be included in the instructions?

A. How much time do you have to work on the test?

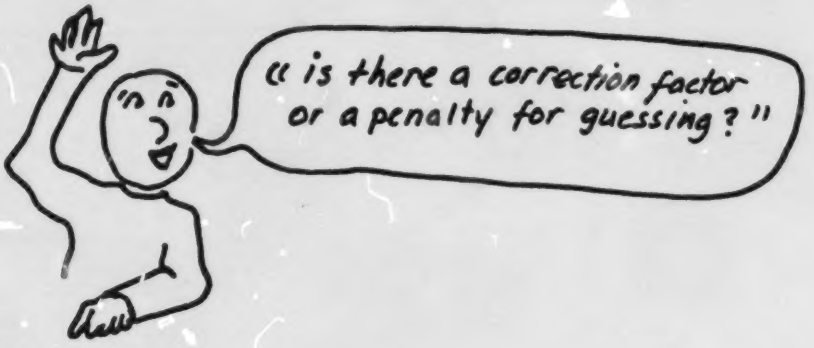
B. How should you record your answers? pen? pencil? IBM pencil? quill pen?

C. Should you guess? Or leave blanks?

D. All of the above

The intended answer is D --- All of the above.

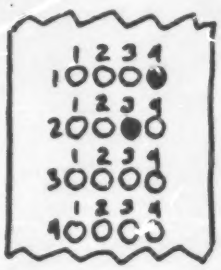
Occasionally, however, the advice about guessing may be missing. If that happens, you should ask the examiner if there is a "correction factor" or "Penalty for guessing"



No doubt you are curious about "Correction factors" and "Penalties for guessing". Please be patient for a moment. These terms will pop up again soon and be described and discussed.

If you are already familar with these terms, you can look forward to having a very easy page or two further along in this package.

Let's look at part of the instructions for the N.L.N. tests:*

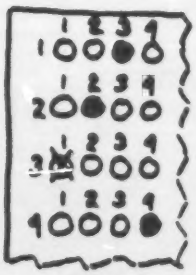


"The illustration at left shows part of an answer sheet and the way answers should be recorded. For question 1, the circle numbered 4 has been COMPLETELY filled in. For question 2, the circle numbered 3 has been COMPLETELY filled in.

Indicate your answer by making a solid black mark in the proper circle on the answer sheet.

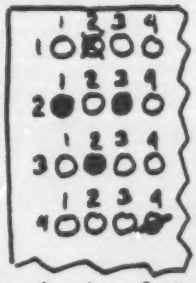
Blacken only one circle for each question."

Which of these answers has not been recorded correctly?



Good choice! The answer to question 3 has not been recorded properly.

Which one of these is marked correctly?



"Third time's the charm" goes the saying. Again, 3 is the correct choice. Did you notice that the question changed? The first question asked you to find the one that was not marked correctly, and the second question asked for the one which is marked correctly. Exam-preparers sometimes switch the questions like the above examples, so that exam-takers have to be very careful to know what the question says!

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Here is additional information from the "General Instructions" of the N.L.N. Achievement Test booklet:

---

*Work in a systematic manner; do not spend too much time on any one question.

Answer all questions to which you think you know the correct answer even though you may not be certain of it. Wild guessing, however, might lower your score.

Use a No. 2 pencil in answering all questions.

Select the ONE of the suggested answers which BEST answers the question, even if you think that some other answer, not listed, would be preferable.

Based on the above information, which of the following is appropriate?

A. When you come to a difficult question, work on it as long as necessary, even if this means not getting to some of the questions on the last page of the test.

B. If you can think of a better answer than the ones given, write the correct answer in the margin of your test paper and draw an arrow from the answer you wrote to the appropriate space on the answer sheet.

C. Use a green pencil to answer the first 50 questions, a red one from 50 to 100, and a No. 2 pencil to answer all questions beyond 100.

D. Be sure you have an answer marked for every question, even if you have no idea about the question or what the answer might be.

E. All of the above.

F. None of the above.

Congratulations! You knew that none of the above are appropriate strategies.

A. was incorrect because you should budget your time so that you can try all the questions on the test. (More later on this.)

B. was wrong because you must choose the best answer of those given.

C. was wrong, of course, because the No. 2 pencil must be used for all answers.

D. was wrong, because the instructions point out that "Wild guessing might lower your score." This is a good clue that a correction factor is used. (More later on this.)

E. is obviously wrong, because A., B., C., D. have already been wrong.

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Earlier, "Correction factor" and "Penalty for guessing" were mentioned. They are now popping up again!

If you are not familiar with these terms, please be particularly attentive to the following discussion because for ANY and EVERY test you EVER TAKE (how's that for important!) you need to know if these are used to calculate your score.

Even if you are familiar with these terms, please stay tuned for some suggestions about guessing which may surprise you!

Let's begin our discussion by calculating a hypothetical test score two ways: Assume that the test had 100 questions, each worth one point. Assume also that in both cases, the person got 80 of the questions correct and missed the other 20.

Case 1: NO correction factor or penalty for guessing

(Many of your classroom tests fall into this category.)

80 correct answers at one point each = 80 points

Case 2: Penalty for Guessing, correction factor is used

(Most standardized tests are in this category:
S.A.T., College Boards, Graduate Record Exam, etc.)

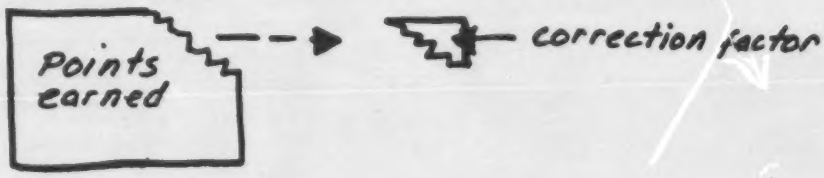
Assume a correction factor of "right minus one fourth the number wrong."

80 correct at one point each is 80 points

20 wrong → one fourth of 20 is 5

80 minus 5 is 75 points

You can see that a "correction factor" or "Penalty for guessing" (the two terms are synonymous) can have the effect of lowering your score.



Why would test-makers want to lower your score?

They assume that everyone guesses on some of the questions. But they want to discourage wild or frequent guessing. They want you to think carefully and make intelligent choices --- take a chance and mark an answer if you have a good idea. But they do not want you to play "Eenie meenie miney moe" all the way through the test.

Let's take a quick look an efficient way to "do" a test, and what to think about when the "Correction factor" can have an effect on your score:

First: Quickly look through the test. Scan the questions on every page. Answer the questions for which you feel confident about the answer. Questions which you have some idea about, or no idea about, leave blank for now.

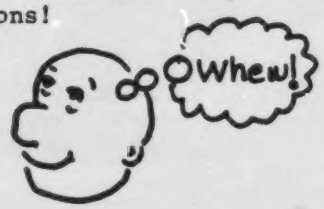
Next: Look at the questions you have some idea about.
Read each question again.
For each question, do these things:
Are there any answers that "feel wrong" to you? Good! You can eliminate them and concentrate on the others.
Now you might have 2 or 3 answers to consider, instead of the 4 or 5 you had in the beginning.

(When you had 4 or 5 choices, your odds of picking the correct answer, just guessing, were only 20-55%.
Choices narrowed to 3 means a 33% chance of guessing correctly.
Choices narrowed to 2 means a 50% chance of choosing correctly.)

When you can narrow down your choices, you increase your chances of picking the correct answer!

When you can narrow down your choices, you should go ahead and guess.

Last: Look at the questions about which you have no idea.
Read each question again. Perhaps one or more of these questions will seem to "make sense" now, after you've spent some time working with the subject of the test, GREAT! Mark your choice and offer yourself hearty congratulations!



But what about the questions that still don't make any sense? (Unfortunately, every test seems to have its share of these.)

Here's where you should use your information about correction factors.

(1.) If there is not a penalty for guessing, you should guess!
Put down an answer for every question.
Use any and all clue words and techniques for guessing that you can think of.

(Check to see if there are any learning packages on strategies for guessing intelligently on tests. Or, contact someone in the Reading and Study Skills lab at your school for more help.)

But, what if there is a penalty for guessing?

read on! choice 2

(2.) If there is a correction factor, you must decide if it is worth the risk to guess. In these situations, a question which you leave blank does not add to your score, but likewise it does not subtract from your score. If a correction factor is used, only wrong answers count against you.

Remember

Help your score: right answers + correct guesses
Hurt your score: wrong answers + wrong guesses
No effect : blanks

Let's look at this example, to see how a correction factor affects a score:

100 questions on the test, one point each
79 correct answers, you are confident about these = 79 points
21 doubtful questions about which you have little or no idea

Let's assume several different situations for those 21 doubtful questions:

1. If you guess wrong on all 21 (It is very unlikely you'd be so unlucky!)

Correction factor "right minus 1/3 the number wrong"

79 correct is 79 points
21 wrong times 1/3 = 7 79 - 7 = 72 points

2. If you got 5 right and 16 wrong of the 21 doubtful questions:

79 right plus 5 guessed correctly is 84 points
16 wrong times 1/3 = 5 1/3 (round off to 5) 84 - 5 = 79 points

You "broke even"! Congratulations!

3. More than 5 right:

6 right 79 + 6 = 85 85 - 1/3(15) = 85 - 5 = 80 points

8 right 79 + 8 = 87 87 - 1/3(13) = 87 - 4 1/3 = 83 points

You can see then with only 5 of the 21 "guesses" being correct, you "broke even", neither helping nor hurting your score. 5 correct answers was enough to balance 16 wrong ones. Any more than 5 correct guesses in 21 guesses would definitely help your score!

Incidentally, the correction factor which is used on most of the N.L.N. tests is "right minus one third the number wrong", the same as was used in the above example.

Do you feel overwhelmed?

Sorry ---- that wasn't intended. But do you feel more comfortable now that you have an understanding about how guessing can help or hurt your score?

Good!

You now have two choices when reading the instructions for a test:

1. Look in the instructions for information about how the test will be scored.
2. Ask the examiner if there is a _____factor or a _____ for guessing.

You're on the right track if you answered "correction" factor or a "Penalty" for guessing.

Remember, the two terms are synonymous.

Now that you're an expert on correction factors, let's look at another test-taking skill for which you also <u>can</u> and <u>should</u> become an expert!

Many tests have time limits. Unfortunately, examiners seem to have E.S.P.! They seem to know when you're just about, but not quite finished. And they seem to always pick that very moment to announce "Time's up!" Just another five minutes and you would have been finished!

Would you like to put that 5 minutes on the OTHER side of the "Time's UP" announcement? Wouldn't it feel great to be finished a little early! Here's how --- 3 magic words ----

BUDGET YOUR TIME

Here's a simple example: 60 questions on a one-hour test

A first calculation would yield a rate of one question per minute. At 15 minutes into the test time, on which question should you be working?

Right! question 15

How about at 30 minutes?

Right again --- 30 questions, or half way through the test

And at 45 minutes?

Right again!

With that scheduling of questions, you would be finished with the last question just as "Time's up" is announced.

In the above example, if you could do each question in 55 seconds instead of a full minute, you'd even have 5 minutes at the end of the test to look over your work!

Obviously you won't spend precious test minutes glued to your watch to make sure you don't spend 65 seconds instead of 60 seconds on each question.

But, it is important to have some "guideposts" along the way---usually every half hour and also at 10-15 minutes before the end of the test time.

Here is a drawing to illustrate "guideposts" for the above 60-question example:

X			X
Begin test	30 minutes 30 questions done	45 min. 45 quest. done	60 min. all quest. done

What "guideposts" would you set up for a 100-item test with a one-hour time limit? Find a diagram like this on your answer sheet and label it.

X	X
Begin the test	End the test

Check your diagram to see that you set up at least 2 guideposts.

> Incidentally, the time-budgeting information in this learning package is for multiple choice or true-false tests. If you are taking tests which also include essay questions or mathematical problems where you must show your work as well as multiple choice or true-false questions, the way you should budget your time is slightly different. Check with someone in the Reading and Study Skills Lab for advice on budgeting time for these "mixed" question tests and for special essay test suggestions.

In the diagram at the top of this page, you set up several gudeposts for your work. When you say "50 questions done at 30 minutes" does it mean you must do your questions like this?

0-15 minutes questions 1-25	16-30 minutes quest. 26-50	31-45 minutes quest. 51-75	46-60 minutes quest. 76-100

That IS one way to do it but that is probably not the most efficient way. A better way would be to use the first block of time to scan through the test and answer questions you KNOW---questions from ANY PLACE in the test

Here's an example of how that might work: 2-hour test with 180 questions

0-30 minutes	31-60 minutes	61-90 minutes	90-120 minutes
any 45 quest. you know--- more than 45 if possible	any other quest. you know and begin work on quest. you have an idea about	finish quest. you have some idea about	quest. you have little or no idea about LAST 5-10 MIN-review and wrap-up

Are these times mandatory? Of course not.

But the SEQUENCE of questions is the most efficient way to use your time:

- First: easy questions, ones you know, from any page in the test
- Next: questions you have some idea about
- Last: as time permits, questions you have little or no idea about

You could label these: FIRST easy, easier — NEXT moderate, difficult — LAST difficult, impossible

However you choose to label these questions, you can bet that they are scattered throughout the test. And you should understand that the writers of these kinds of tests (N.L.N., G.R.E., S.A.T., etc.) do not expect anyone to get all of the questions right! That is why they include so many apparently "impossible" questions!

Why should you do all the questions you know first? Odds are, you'll know several answers on the last page. What would happen if you didn't get a chance to get to the last page to answer questions before time ran out?

Right. Sadly, you would get no points for those questions you didn't answer----even if you knew the answers!

Imagine the cheerleaders cheering for you:

GO GO GO GO!

Shall all you know!

Answer 1st the easy ones!

Then try the harder ones!

Don't worry about the "awful" ones!

Just GO GO GO!

Do you now have a "feel" for how to budget your time?

Try this exercise: Mark your answer in the box on your answer sheet.

This test has 120 questions and a 2-hour time limit. This box represents your two hours. Put in rough dividers and indicate times and types of questions you would be working on in each section of time.

120 minutes

Begin

End

Check your drawing using these guidelines:

1. Is there some point marked for ½ way (approx. one hour) through the time?
2. Are there points marked at approximately 30 and 90 minutes?
3. Are questions done in this order - easy---average---difficult? (or whatever names you chose)
4. Did you provide for a review/wrap up time at the end of the test?

Don't worry too much if you forgot the review. It will be discussed in more detail later in this package. Do be sure that you have items 1,2, and 3 in your diagram!

In the previous section, you learned that you should do all the "easy" questions first. And you should save the really impossible questions till last. But what should you do with the rest of the questions---- the ones in between "easy" and "impossible"? Read on!

Easy	?	Impossible

These questions might be called "thinkers" because some intelligent thinking will help you figure out the correct answers.

Where should you begin on one of these questions?

Right! The beginning! Read the question carefully! Think about it! Then read each answer carefully.

Ask yourself these questions:

1. Does any answer seem obviously wrong? (if so, eliminate it right now)
2. Do most answers "Make sense"? But one does not? (you can probably eliminate the one that doesn't make sense.)

Try this sample question. See if you can eliminate one or two answers.

A patient having hezzelwhipple's syndrome should:

1. Take a shower with his umbrella plant daily.
2. Take anti-hezzel medicine hourly.
3. Exercise his whipple twice a day.
4. Eat three artichokes for breakfast each Sunday.

of course, actual test questions are not this absurd, but the point of this exercise was for you to practice eliminating" obviously absurd" answers such as 1 and 4.

Remember: When you can eliminate one or more answers, you chances of getting the question right increase!

Random guessing one of four answers:	25% chance of being right
Eliminate one, guess from among 3:	33 1/3% chance
Eliminate two, guess between two:	50% chance

MORE

Systematically eliminate 3 of the answers and the remaining choice should be the correct one!

In addition to eliminating absurd choices, there are other ways to narrow down the possible choices.

Here is a very simple rule---so simple that we all forget it sometimes---a rule that works on ALL tests!

KNOW WHAT THE QUESTION ASKS!

That seems too simple, but please read on!

People often fall into the trap of always looking for the BEST answer or the MOST LIKELY thing which would happen. Test makers know that and therefore they throw in reversed-thinking questions occasionally.

Here are some ways reversed-thinking questions might be stated:

Which of these is <u>not</u> a cause of ...?

... in the blood is an indication that the patient does <u>not</u> have:

What should never be given a patient in .....situation?

You can see that these questions must be read very carefully!

Can you find any reversed-thinking indicators in this question?

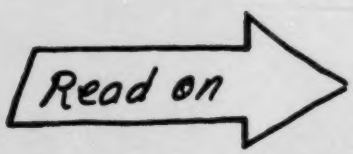
Which of the following is unlikely to occur following removal of the gall bladder?

Con gratulations! You picked "unlikely".

For more information on handling these and other types of multiple-choice questions, ---- and advice about true-false and essay tests---- look for other learning packages or consult your Reading and Study Skills Clinic.

Has all this practice with absurd and reversed-thinking questions made you nervous? If it has, you are certainly not alone. Just the word "test" can send shivers up and down the spines of the bravest student! In fact, practically every person in a testing situation is somewhat nervous---even the examiner!

Is tension bad for you?



Interestingly enough, the answer is NO!

Psychologists tell us that a <u>little</u> tension is a good thing. It keeps us alert. It helps us continue striving toward our goals.

But <u>too much</u> tension is not healthy, as anyone with ulcers can tell you. And too much tension (or feelings of panic or hopelessness) can be a real stumbling block to a person taking a test.

However, if you are constantly thinking "I am tense," "I don't understand any of this", "I'll never finish," or "This is awful," you may be too tense.

Will you know if you have the right amount of tension? Probably yes. If you are feeling the need to hurry, yet at the same time you feel that you probably <u>will</u> finish the test on time, that's probably a useful amount of tension.

What is probably happening when you are too tense?

a. Your mind has become dominated by feelings of frustration and inadequacy
b. Too much of your thinking energy is being directed to your feelings, leaving little "grey matter" at work on the task at hand---the test.
c. Both a and b
d. Neither a nor b

How did you ever guess!

So, STEP ONE is to recognize if and when you feel too tense to be efficient or effective.

What is STEP TWO?

Right!!! DO something to relieve that tension!

Which of these would be a good "relaxer"?

A. Go sharpen your pencil.
B. Get into your favorite T.M. position and chant your mantra for 2 minutes.
C. Get a drink of water.
D. All of the above.
E. None of the above.

There's no doubt that A (sharpen pencil) and C (drink) would be good relaxers. However, during a test situation such as the N.L.N. (G.R.E., S.A.T., etc.) you will probably not be allowed to leave your seat.

And choice B--T.M. Well, before the test would be a great time to meditate. You would come to the test alert and refreshed. However, during the test would probably not be a wise time because you need each minute to work on more questions.

That leaves D---All of the above. Can that be true ? You've eliminated A, B, and C.

So E must be it---none of the above.

O.K. So now what? You've eliminated T.M. and you can't leave your seat.

What about some activities that you can do in your seat? Activities that take a short time (is 5-15 seconds short enough?) and won't disturb your fellow "test-takers"?

Whole books have been written on relaxing. And people have made bundles of money teaching others how to relax.

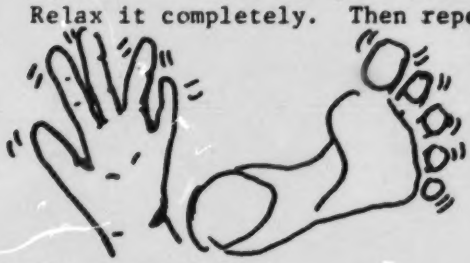
One or two pages in an instructional package can hardly do justice to all this wealth of material on relaxation. Therefore, here is information on where to learn more about relaxation, and a couple of easy and quick ideas you might try to help yourself relax!

Where can I get more information on how to relax?

1. Reading and Study Clinic at school
2. School counselors
3. Books
4. Private professionals such as psychologists and psychiatrists
5. The county mental health clinic
6. Courses such as those teaching T.M.
7. Friends who seem successful at "test taking"

Put down your pencil. Try each of these "relaxers" listed on the next page.

1. Tense up your arm, leg, or hand
   Hold it in the tense position for 10 seconds
   Relax it completely. Then repeat.

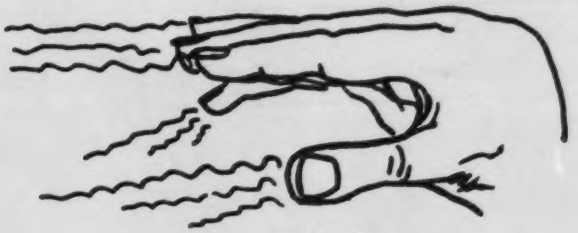


2. Wiggle your fingers and/or toes while saying to yourself "relax, relax, relax."

3. Close your eyes
   Take several slow, deep breaths.

4. Get out a piece of gum (sugarless, please). a mint, or a lifesaver (oops, those aren't sugarless) to chew on. Don't rattle the wrapper so much that you disturb others.

5. Say to yourself "Let the tension flow out of my fingers. Let the tension flow out of my toes'. And Imagine that you feel the tension flowing out as if it were water running off your hand or foot.



6. Close your eyes, put your head back, rub your neck with your hands.

Try each of these as many times as you wish. Get an idea which seem to work the best for you.

Now close your eyes and make a mental list of at least three things you can do while sitting in your seat to relieve tension!

Feel more relaxed already? Great!

Relaxing "on cue" is a useful skill for many situations during life! The more you practice "relaxing" the better a "relaxer" you will become!

Easing your tension by relaxing is something that can be done at any point in the test, and at any time during the test session that you feel the need or desire to do it.

Let's switch now to something which can only be done at one point in the test---at the end.

Earlier in this package, you practiced "budgeting your time" on testing. Several of the sample "time budgets" showed a small bit of time at the end of the test called "review/wrap up".

What could that include?
It is obviously <u>not</u> the reviewing that you do when studying for a test--- that had to be done before you ever came to the testing room.
It <u>is</u> the reviewing of what you have done on the test itself. "Review" implies looking back over something, and that's just what this is---looking back over your answers and doing other" mechanical" tasks and answering such questions as:

Does every question have only one answer marked (unless directions state otherwise)?
Are all erasures done completely?
Are all intended marks heavy and made neatly within the circles?
Is the paper free from any extra marks such as doodles in the margin?
Is your name, etc. correctly filled in?
Were any questions left blank? If so, you'll need to decide if you want to leave them blank or if you want to take a guess as to the answer.

How much time should this review take?

That's your decision, but a guideline might be "no more than 2-5 minutes per hour of test time". A one-hour test might have 2-5 minutes of review a two-hour test might have ____to ____ minutes' review.

Right! 4-10

You began at the beginning---filling in your name and deciding how to budget your time on a test.

You read about and practiced what to do in the middle of a test session----both how to handle questions and how to relax.

And you learned about what to do at the end of the test----review.

And, speaking of "ends", you are just about to the end of this packet!

Here are 3 quick summary questions before you turn to the evaluation exercise. Please mark your answers on your answer sheet.

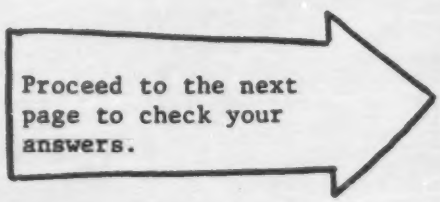
1. Imagine that you have just been given a test with 50 multiple-choice questions. Scattered throughout the 50 questions are some of average difficulty, some that appear to be very difficult, and some that you feel are quite easy. In what order should you do these questions?

   A. In numerical order, from 1 to 50
   B. Difficult, then easy, then average
   C. Easy ones, then average, and last the difficult ones

2. List 3 things you can do, in 30 seconds or less, while sitting in your seat during a test, to relieve tension.

3. Define, describe, or give an example of "penalty of guessing."

Finished? Fine!



Quickly check your answers:

1. C is the best answer
   First do all the easy questions, next the average ones, and last do the difficult ones.
   For review of this sequence, turn back to pages 16 and 17.

2. Any three or more of the following relaxation activities, or others that work for you, are acceptable answers:
   -- tense, hold for 10 seconds, then relax an arm, leg, or fingers
   -- wiggle your fingers and/or toes
   -- say to yourself "relax, relax"
   -- eat a mint, lifesaver, or piece of gum (can you hear your dentist adding "sugarless please"?)
   -- imagine that tension is like water and imagine it flowing off your fingertips onto the floor
   For review of relaxation techniques, turn to pages 20, 21, and 22.

3. "Penalty for guessing" or "correction factor" means that each wrong answer counts part of a point against your score.

   An example: "right minus one-third the number wrong"
   100 questions 82 correct minus 1/3 (18 wrong) = 82 - 6 = 76

   Your answer should express the same ideas as this one, but it of course need not be word for word the same.

   For more information and example of correction factors, see pages 11, 12, and 13.

Do you feel more confident about the "mechanics" of test-taking than you did at the beginning of this package?

Great!

By now, you are probably anxious to finish this package by completing the evaluation exercise and finding out how much you've learned!

Good! Your opportunity to do just that begins on the next page --- and it is only 12 questions long! So,

EVALUATION EXERCISE

To help you evaluate how much you've learned by doing the reading and activities in this package, you will be taking a short (12 questions) test. You will be reading the instructions like an examiner would read them to you, you will be filling in the name area on the answer sheet, and you will be answering the questions on the answer sheet. You will also check your own "test" and score it using a correction factor. Then you will complete a short checklist indicating test-taking strategies which you used in doing this short test. Incidentally, the test contains some easy questions, some average ones, and some difficult ones, just to give you practice planning in what order to do them! GOOD LUCK!

You will need these materials:

"Instructions to examiner"

Facsimile N.L.N. answer sheet

Pencil

Test "booklet" titled Facsimile N.L.N. Achievement Test

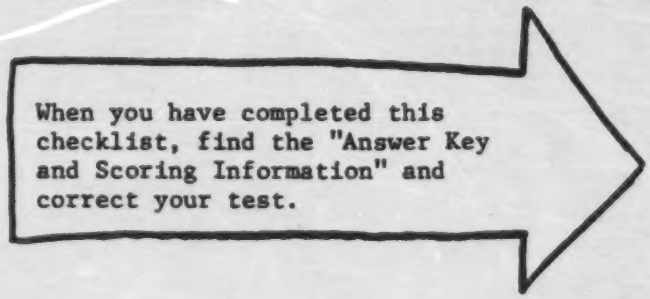
Procedure:

1. In the "instructions to examiner", read about how to fill in the name grid on your answer sheet. Then fill it in properly.
2. Read the instructions in the test booklet.
3. Answer the questions on the test. Put your answers on the answer sheet, beginning with answer space 1.
4. When you are finished with the test, find the "Checklist of Test-Taking Strategies" and check those things which you did.
5. Check your answers by using the "Answer Key". (Page 28)
6. Score your test. (Page 29)
7. Fill out the sheet titled Evaluation of the Post-Test and package.
8. Take with you the sheet titled Test-Taking Strategies: A Quick Review. It's yours to keep for when you need it with a real test.

CHECKLIST OF TEST TAKING STRATEGIES

Did you do these things? Please mark "yes" or "no" in the appropriate spaces on your worksheet which you have been using with this package.

1. Write information clearly and accurately on "name grid" portion of answer sheet.
2. Read instructions on page one of the test booklet.
3. Thought about the penalty for guessing.
4. Quickly glanced through entire test.
5. Decided how to budget your time.
6. Quickly answered the "easy" questions throughout the test.
7. Returned to unanswered questions.
8. Mentally "crossed out" answers which were likely to be incorrect.
9. Read questions carefully for such words as "not", "least", and "unlikely".
10. Used tension-reliever. (List which one or ones on your worksheet.)
11. Used last half-minute or minute to see that all answer marks were heavy and that there were no stray marks on the answer sheet. Checked to see that all erasures were done thoroughly.
12. Rechecked to see that name grid was filled in correctly.
13. Any questions left blank? If so, discuss reasons for leaving them blank. Put this information on your worksheet.



ANSWER KEY FOR POST-TEST

1. C — Monday morning follows Sunday evening.

2. B — "Most likely" is the clue phrase. You can eliminate choices A and D. Nurse C might have breastfeeding infants in her care, but most of her patients are older. In some hospitals, as many as 50% of the newborns are breastfeeding; therefore, maternity nurses need to know as much as possible about this.

2. C? — This question probably doesn't have an answer although you can give a good argument for choice C because it is different from the others. Choice A and D have "never" and "all", words which often are clues that those choices are incorrect.

4. D — There are three major differences which may occur. The size of the infant is the most often used determiner of prematurity.

5. A? — This was intended to be a very difficult question. Depending on the patients, each of these situations could be very "touchy". Possibly A, because it involves the patient's husband and three relatives, would require the most judgment and tact on the part of the nurse.

6. D — D seems to suggest a humane way to deal with a adult. Turning off the TV could anger the patient, but choice C could be argued-for as an answer if the patient has a hearing loss or difficulties in swallowing which would require his total attention to be focused on the nurse rather than the TV.

7. C — Good! You saw the word "least" in the question. In fact, rather than give the advice in answer C, you might want to discuss the advantages of not introducing cake early.

8. C? — This is another "toughie." C is the intended answer because it qualifies "whenever possible." However, realistically, a legislature might write a law requiring "all" or "none" if they were not aware of possible exceptions which might arise.

9. D — By including 2 of the other answers, and also by being "different" in appearance than the other choices, it is the logical one to pick.

10. C — Did you choose D instead? Ooops, you probably missed "not" in the question.

11. C — Intended to be thought-provoking, this question shows how an intended answer may be "given away" by the phrasing of the question. Notice that "whizle" appears in both the question and answer C.

12. C — A might be a goal, but it is unlikely to occur.
B---a few mothers might need Caeserian sections, but you would not want a majority of your patients to request them.
D---Your goal is "many", not "few" awake and aware mothers.

Read on for scoring information

SCORING YOUR TEST

Find the area on your worksheet marked "Post-test scoring calculation". Please do your figuring in that area.

1. Count up the number of questions you got correct. Write that number on your worksheet.

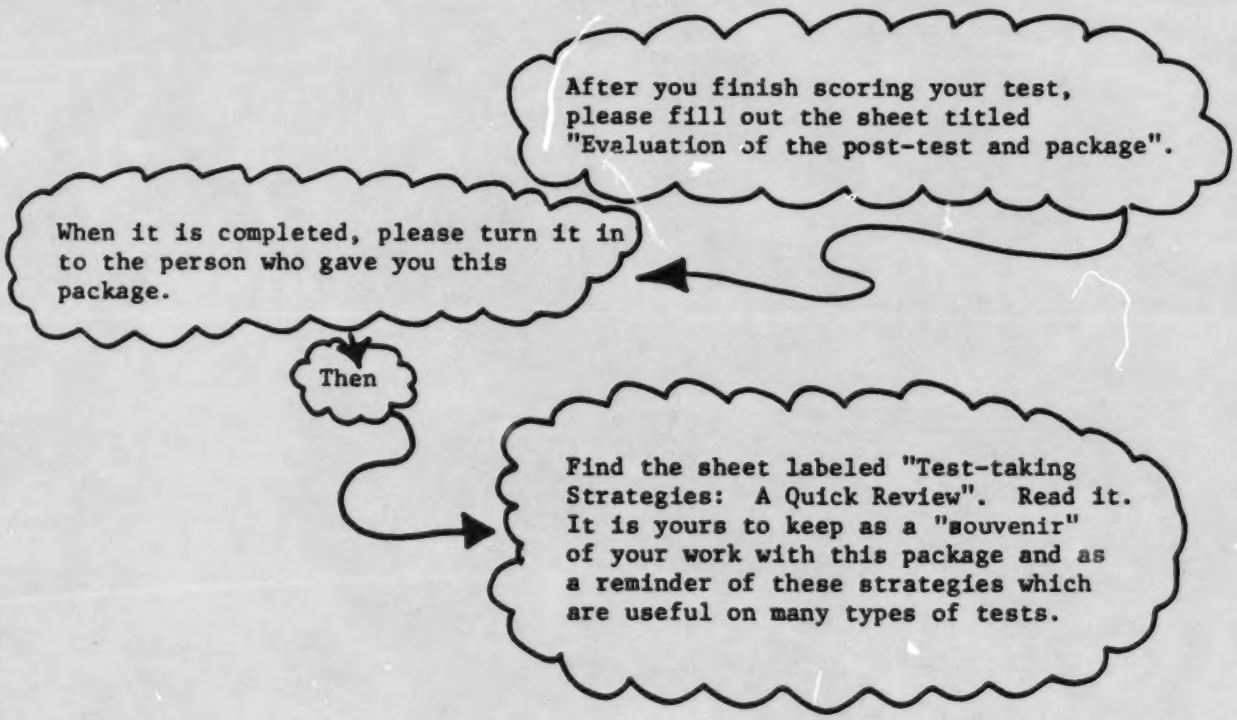
2. Count the number left blank. Write it on your worksheet.

3. Count the number of questions you got wrong. Write it on your worksheet.

4. Multiply the number wrong by the fraction 1/3. Round off your answer.

5. Subtract the answer in step 4 from the answer in step 1. The answer to this subtraction problem is your score.

This scoring procedure corresponds to a correction factor "right - 1/3 wrong" which is the same one used on most N.L.N. Achievement Tests.

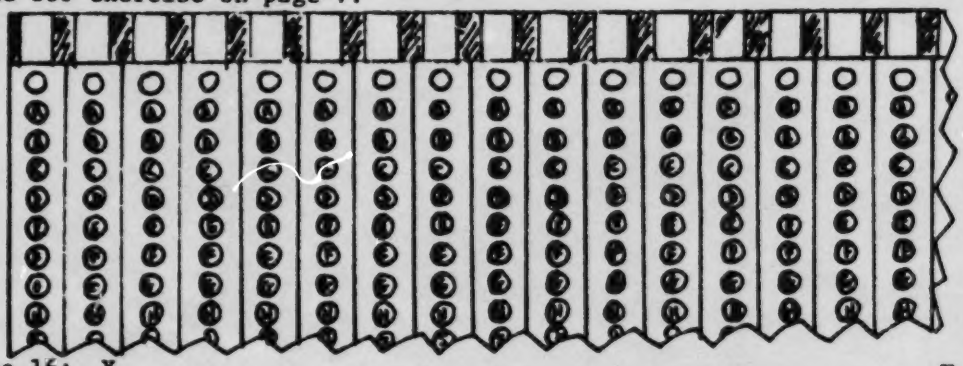

After you finish scoring your test, please fill out the sheet titled "Evaluation of the post-test and package".
When it is completed, please turn it in to the person who gave you this package.
Then
Find the sheet labeled "Test-taking Strategies: A Quick Review". Read it. It is yours to keep as a "souvenir" of your work with this package and as a reminder of these strategies which are useful on many types of tests.

ANSWER SHEET FOR PACKAGE

TEST-TAKING STRATEGIES FOR THE N.L.N. ACHIEVEMENT TESTS

Name:_____ Date:_____

Grid for exercise on page 7:



Page 16: X_____X
Begin End

Page 17: _____ 120 minutes _____

Begin End

_____

Page 24: 1.

2. 1.

2.

3.

3.

Checklist of Test-taking Strategies: (page 28)

____ 1. ____ 2. ____ 3. ____ 4. ____ 5. ____ 6.

____ 7. ____ 8 ____ 9. 10. Tension relievers used:

_____ _____

13. Reasons for blanks (if any): _____

Posttest scoring calculations: (page 30)

1. Number correct_____
2. Number blank_____
3. Number wr[illegible]_____
4. Number [illegible] multiplied by 1/3: _____ (Round to nearest whole number.)
5. Number right (step 1) _____ minus factor (step 4) _____ = _____
(your score)

EVALUATION OF THE POST-TEST AND THE PACKAGE

By writing this package, I have tried to help you in preparing for the N.L.N. tests. Now I need you to help me by completing this evaluation. Your responses will help me by completing this evaluation. Your responses will help me to revise the package in places where it is weak and to strengthen portions which need improvement. And, of course, any comments about portions which are strong are also appreciated so that I may continue to use those sections. In this way, the package will evolve to be as helpful as possible to people who choose to do it in the future. I appreciate your assistance. Thanks!

Leslie Bateman

1. After doing this package, I now know _____
   (quite a bit) (something) (nothing)
   about how the N.L.N. test materials will look.

2. How comfortable do you feel with the "information" side of the answer sheet?

   ____ very comfortable ____ somewhat comfortable ____ uncomfortable

3. How well did you budget your time on the post-test?

   ____ very well ____ adequately ____ not well

4. If you did not finish the post-test, please indicate possible reasons:

   ____ didn't budget time well enough ____ questions tricky or difficult

   ____ other Please explain: _____

5. Having explanations to accompany the answer key to the post-test:

   ____ helped a great deal ____ helped some

   ____ had little effect ____ was distracting/confusing

6. "Nonsense words" in the test were:

   ____ a good tension breaker ____ confusing

   ____ good because they kept me from becoming "hung up" in the content of the test, therefore I could concentrate on the process

   ____ other Please explain: _____

7. Please list the approximate time it took you to complete:

   The instruction portion of the package: _____

   The post-test and scoring of it: _____

8. Please indicate your opinions about the length of these sections:

   Instruction: _____ O.K. _____ too long _____ too short
   Post-test,etc._____ O.K. _____ too long _____ too short

9. What parts should be cut? _____

   What parts should be lengthened? _____

10. Would you be interested in doing a "follow-up" package which actually discusses the types of questions and the content of the various N.L.N. Achievment Tests?

    ____ Yes _____ Probably _____ No

TEST-TAKING STRATEGIES: A QUICK REVIEW

This is your page. Some reminders are listed on the left side. The space on the right is for you to add your own hints, ideas, warnings, or whatever else comes to mind. This page is yours to keep, but please return all the other package materials.

General hints:

Listen to instructions.
Use pencil as requested.
Fill in spaces properly.
No stray marks on paper.

Budget your time:

Guidelines every ½ hour.
Know when time is to be up.
Answer easy questions first.
Leave difficult ones to last.
Review at the end.

Penalty for guessing:

Is there a correction factor?
If you have a good idea or a hunch, mark it.
Try to eliminate some choices.
Guess intelligently, not wildly.

Relax!

A little tension is OK.
Too much interferes with your thinking clearly.
Find relaxation techniques that work for you. Use them!

* *

Most likely, you have done this package before taking any of the N.L.N. tests. It is difficult to say now if doing this package will help you take the test, feel more confident, etc. However, after taking an N.L.N. test you will be in a position to look back on this package and evaluate the extent to which it helped you. Therefore, I'd love your help and suggestions for improving this package, after you've taken an N.L.N. test. Just fill in these few questions and rip off the bottom part of this page. Send it to me c/o the Nursing Dept. at Brookdale Community College, Lincroft, N.J. 07738.

Thanks! Leslie Bateman

36

1. Was this your first N.L.N. test?
2. Was it easier, the same, or more difficult than you expected?
3. How much do you feel doing this package helped you?
4. Do any parts of the package stand out as having been very helpful?
5. Any comments, suggestions, etc.?

INSTRUCTIONS TO EXAMINER

Make sure students have the name grid face up and the side of the answer sheet that says "N.L.N. Achievement Test" is face down.

Be sure all students have been reminded to use only a No. 2 pencil. Also tell them to be sure to mark only in the correct places and to make no stray marks which might be "read" by the machine scoring the test.

Read the following instructions to the students:*

> "Turn your answer sheet sideways so the row of boxes for your name is at the top. In the large grid, where "Last Name" is indicated, print your name, last name first, one letter in each box. Skip a space between your last name, first name, and middle initial. If your entire name does not fit in the boxes provided, you should be sure that your last name is complete, but your first name may be abbreviated and your middle initial omitted. Below each box in which you have printed a letter, blacken the circle that has the same letter printed in it." (Pause while students do this.)
>
> "Now, for all boxes you left empty, blacken the empty circles directly below."
>
> "Fill the circles completely and be sure that marks are dark and solid. If you make a mistake, erase carefully and fill in the correct circle. Be sure that there is one, and only one mark in each column." (Pause while students do this.)
>
> "Now turn your paper over so that "N.L.N. Achievement Test" is at the top, and I will distribute the test booklets."
>
> (Get your test booklet).

Turn to the instructions on page one of the test booklet. Read the instructions. (Pause while students do this.)

This test has 12 questions. You will have 15 minutes to complete the test.....Begin working now.

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Reference sheet to accompany
"Test-Taking Strategies for the
N.L.N. Achievement Tests" by
Leslie M. Bateman.

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A PROJECT OF THE LEAGUE FOR INNOVATION IN THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

FACSIMILE

N.L.N. ACHIEVEMENT TEST

to accompany

"Test-taking Strategies for the
N.L.N. Achievement Tests"

by

Leslie M. Bateman

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* GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

Each question in this test lists four possible answers. You are to select the ONE BEST answer for each question. You are to mark your answers on the separate answer sheet, NOT in the test booklet. You MUST use a No. 2 pencil to mark your answers.

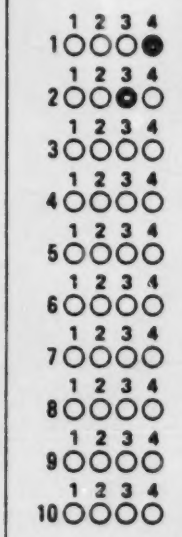
There are two types of questions in this test. Here is an example of each kind with information regarding the use of the answer sheet:

1. This test is designed to measure

   1. reading speed.
   2. cultural background.
   3. general knowledge.
   4. specific nursing knowledge.

2. Which of these procedures should you follow in taking this test?
   A. Scribble in your test booklet.
   B. Read carefully.
   C. Select the one best answer for each question.

   1. A only.
   2. A and B.
   3. B and C.
   4. All of them.



Answer 4 is the best response to question 1.

Answer 3 is the best response to question 2 because you should do B and C in taking the test, but not A.

If, however, A, B, and C were all true, credit would be given ONLY for the answer "All of them," and not for the answer "B and C," even though "B and C" would be a partially correct answer.

The illustration at left shows part of an answer sheet and the way answers should be recorded. For question 1, the circle numbered 4 has been COMPLETELY filled in. For question 2, the circle numbered 3 has been COMPLETELY filled in.

Be sure you understand these directions before beginning the test, and follow them carefully:

1. Read each question carefully.
2. Select that ONE of the suggested answers which BEST answers the question, even if you think that some other answer, not listed, would be preferable.
3. Indicate your answer by making a solid black mark in the proper circle on the answer sheet. Blacken only one circle for each question.
4. Use a No. 2 pencil in answering all questions.
5. Erase thoroughly all stray pencil marks on your answer sheet. If you don't, your answers may be scored wrong.
6. Work in a systematic manner; do not spend too much time on any one question.
7. Answer all questions to which you think you know the correct answer even though you may not be certain of it. Wild guessing, however, might lower your score.

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POST TEST

1. When a patient is admitted to the hospital on Sunday evening for a tonsillectomy the following morning, he will have surgery on:

   A. Wednesday
   B. Friday
   C. Monday
   D. none of the above

2. Which of these hospital staff members would be the most likely to need knowledge about a breastfed infant?

   A. Admissions clerk
   B. Nurse on the Maternity floor
   C. LPN in Pediatrics
   D. Nurse on the Surgical floor

3. If a squizzle fribbles the drig, which of these is most likely to be the cause?

   A. Drigs and squizzles are never hoponomotids.
   B. Drigs are usually fribbled after a full meal.
   C. Squizzles have a natural affinity for drigs, unless the drig is green. Green drigs taste awful.
   D. All squizzles respond negatively to blittens.

4. The premature infant is likely to differ from the full-term infant in which of the following ways?

   A. Strength of the sucking reflex
   B. Ability to regulate body temperture
   C. Size (weight and length)
   D. All of the above

5. Which of these situations calls for the greatest judgment on the part of the nurse?

   A. Three relative of the patient have zlurped, the patient's husband broke his blodlederflig, and she must be told this news.
   B. Mr. Golleywhiz just returned from 3 hours in Xray, but none of the Xrays came out. He must return immediately to Xray and therefore miss lunch.
   C. The florist just delivered 3 more bouquets of roses for Mrs. Flostewigle and she is allergic to roses.
   D. Mr. Loveladies has been on the ward but now a semi-private room is available and he must be moved this morning.

6. If a patient has been diagnosed as having pliptelpeg syndrome, what procedures must you follow when entering his room to give medication?

   A. Call first on the phone and ask patient if he's awake and ready for the medication.
   B. Remove your shoes and tip-toe to the bed while keeping your left foot in a bucket of water.
   C. Turn off his TV so he will shift his attention from the TV to you.
   D. Enter cheerfully, speak in a normal tone of voice, offer praise for his success in swallowing the cupful of capsules you've brought.

7. A new mother is discussing introducing "solids" to her 6-month-old daughter. Of the following, what would be the least important idea to discuss with her?

   A. After introducing a new food, wait a few days to see if any reaction occurs before trying another new food.
   B. Choose foods with soft textures -- bananas, applesauce, yogurt, for example.
   C. Be sure to introduce cake early so your child can eat it at birthday parties.
   D. Stay away from artificially-sweetened drinks -- serve apple juice instead.

8. The Gollyhollywhomplefizz law, passed by the NJ legislature in 1873, states that:

   A. Gollies should never be released from the hospital.
   B. Fizzies should always have first priority for available hospital beds.
   C. Whenever possible, patients diagnosed as having hollies should have private rooms in the hospital.
   D. All whomples must be retained in the Pediatric Department's files.

---- If you are not yet feeling tense or panicked, pretend that you are and react appropriately.-----

9. Positive indicators that a patient has Fillpotomania include:

   A. An empty vase sitting on the shelf.
   B. An entire roll of toilet paper unrolled and stuffed into the toilet.
   C. 83 small coleus plants in the room.
   D. B & C.

10. One of your neighbors has been diagnosed as having diabetes. He will be a dinner guest in your home tonight. Which of these would not be an appropriate dessert?

    A. Sugar-free cookies.
    B. Orange and apple slices.
    C. Chocolate cake ala mode.
    D. A and B.

11. When a patient's whizle plocks, what must the nurse do first?

    A. Reopen the hohoplate.
    B. Turn the gloogle upside down.
    C. Rush the patient to surgery for an immediate whizleectomy.
    D. Count the number of heeples per minute.

12. You have been asked to conduct a series of classes on "prepared childbirth". A reasonable outcome of your classes would be:

    A. Patients would all have unmedicated deliveries.
    B. Most mothers would request to have Caeserian deliveries.
    C. Most couples would exhibit greater knowledge and confidence about the upcoming labor and delivery.
    D. Few mothers would want to be awake during their deliveries.

--- End of Test ---

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Facsimile Test Page 5

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